

Oriental Taint

Access to this page requires DM permission and starts with at least 1 rank in Knowledge (Local History, Rokugan).

Taint: is a game mechanic, first introduced in the Unearthed Arcana (page 189), that is a measure of corruption upon the soul. It is a physical and spiritual affliction that slowly and inexorably corrupts every aspect of the victim's life. The Taint is nothing less than the influence of the dark lord Fu Leng. It has twisted and fouled the Shadowlands. This idea is that great evil is so powerful the not only does it mark the person's soul, but it creates visual and spiritual symptoms. Simply having an evil alignment is no defense against taint--it is too profound and the effect on personal beliefs and moral codes is too strong to ward it off.

A character can get Taint from being damaged by a Tainted creature's natural attack, an attack with an obsidian weapon, casting a maho spell, exposure to the Shadowlands, handling a tainted object, or using a Taint based power.

Detect evil spells can easily be modified into detect taint spells, once a character learns about the Taint. Either arcane or divine spell caster can gain the detect taint spell. A divine caster merely prays for it, once they learn about it. A wizard needs to have the detect evil spell and can modify that into a detect taint spell with a little research and work; granting them a new spell. A sorcerer or bard that has the detect evil spell can put a twist on it to make a detect taint spell; in effect giving them a new spell.

The Shadowlands Taint

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The Shadowlands was once the home of an advanced civilization. When Fu Leng fell to the earth, from Tengoku, he fell upon the Shadowlands destroying that civilization and creating a great pit as he transcended from Ningen-do to Jigoku, which twisted and corrupted Fu Leng bestowing dark powers that the other Kami couldn't comprehend. Twice he has come close to taking over, both times he was barely defeated by mortals, the second time he was killed. Even today his name is rarely spoken people fear his power even beyond death. The Carpeneter wall is and the Shinomen Forest are all that stands between the Shadowlands, and its Taint and the rest of civilization. And the Crab Clan are those who are most tested by the Taint. Shadowlands Taint is covered in Chapter 3 of Rokugan, it is a gradual and inexorable corruption of a victim's body and soul. It has a terrible cost causing creatures to become psychotic and paranoid, as a horrible corruption takes their soul. Most creatures found to be corrupted are banished to the Shadowlands, since there are so few ways to remove Taint once it has been gained. It also can grant additional abilities and powers, but they all have a terrible cost.

Combat with a Tainted creature can cause the combatant to get Taint from either obsidian weapons or from the Tainted creatures claws and bite or other natural weapons. Unless the wound is properly treated. Requiring a Heal check. Creatures with the Shadowlands subtype do not acquire Taint and are immune to it's effects. The would have a Taint score of 1/2 their Cha. Undead would have this number +1, and Outsiders would have 1/2 their Cha +2 points of Taint.

A Taint score applies as a negative bonus to Wis and Con scores. If a character's Con drops to zero from Taint he dies and rises as an undead. If a character's Wis drops to zero from Taint they fall into a coma tortured with nightmares. Those who experience and use Taint may be able to suppress their Taint and can ignore some of the penalties. If a character's Taint score reaches 10+ the character becomes a slave to evil. Their character travels to the Shadowlands, where they are often killed by its inhabitants or Crab patrols. Survivors are met by akutsuka, a semihuman servant of evil, who tests them for skill and loyalty. If they survive the test they are trained in the maho-bujin or maho-tsuki prestige classes. Regardless of what happens they become NPCs under the control of the DM.

Any creature, except oni, who die in the Shadowlands animates as undead. Crab protocols call for burning the dead.

Curing the Taint: is very hard. There is a shugenja spell that allows the shugenja who casts it to absorb all the taint from other creatures within the area of effect for the spell. However, this would all but destroy the shugenja. Since shugenja are rare and cherished it would be a crime to use up a shugenja this way. The acceptable alternative is usually Seppuku. There are special Teas that reduces the symptoms, but they come with a cost.

Magic in the Shadowlands

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All divine magic in the Shadowlands is impeded (shugenja are divine casters). Arcane spells cast in the Shadowlands have the Empower Spell feat applied to them at no additional cost to the caster.

Casting a maho (blood) spell can give the caster and the spell's targets Taint, unless they make a Fort save agaisnt it.

Learning a spell from the maho list requires the caster to make a Knowledge (Shadowlands) check or a Knowledge (the Planes) with ranks earned in Rokugan. It counts as one of the number of spells known and it counts as a spell outside of the shugenja's element.

The Effects of Taint on a Character

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A character with Taint can use his Taint Modifier on any Str, Dex, or Con ability or skill check. They may also gain bonus maho spells that they can cast each day. They also suffer a loss of 1 point to their Wis and Con scores for each point of Taint they acquire. Characters with a high taint score start to get additional effects; both in power and disabilities that increase as their taint increases. At some point the Taint will take over the character turning them into an NPC under the control of the DM.